# **UTAH INTERAGENCY FIRE**

## Drones in Wildfire Scenes Put Lives At Risk

### Putting lives at risk for a snapshot

- 1. Rotor systems on helicopters are very vulnerable to impacts by drones
- 2. Drone intrusions always result in automatic shutdown of firefighting aircraft.
- 3. Shutdowns put ground resources at risk as they depend of bucket drops.
- 4. Lives, homes and resources are put at risk during shutdowns
- 5. Pilots are not able to see drones, especially at low elevations
- 6. Aircraft move from one incident to another without warning as needed.
- 7. Even the most accomplished drone operators are not able to maintain safe distance.
- 8. 161 firefighters have died in wildland fire aviation mishaps. Aircraft already have inherent risks, drones multiply the danger.

## **Criminal Penalties**

Utah law prohibits the operation of unmanned aircraft over wildfire scenes. Mechanisms exist for legitimate users (media, utilities etc) to gain access.

#### Title 65A Chapter 3 Section 2.5:

- Drone is operating over a wildfire scene: **CLASS B MISDEMEANOR**
- Drone causes firefighting aircraft to divert or drop outside intended area: **CLASS A MISDEMEANOR**
- Drone comes in contact with firefighting aircraft: **3rd DEGREE FELONY**
- Drone causes firefighting aircraft to crash:

#### **2ND DEGREE FELONY**

Any law enforcement agency can arrest and/or cite under the law. (\*Federal penalties also possible)



Due to weight, aircraft carrying fire retardant CANNOT land without first dropping the payload.









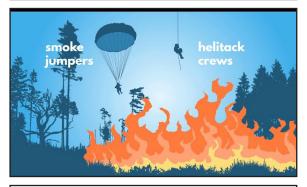




Pilots flying the aircraft used on wildfires have a complex job. They must account for:

- 1. Low altitudes
- 2. Avoiding Terrain and Trees
- 3. Swinging Cargo and/or Buckets
- 4. Fire Personnel Below
- 5. Fire Behavior
- 6. Other Fire Aircraft
- 7. Full-sized Aircraft

Drones introduce an additional factor in an already complex situation where lives have been lost.



Drones compromise the safety of a number of different resources other than aircraft.

Law enforcement agencies may form task force response to locate and aprehend reckless drone operators. Response includes:

- Identify access points drone operators may 1. use near fire area
- 2 Set perimeter locations for setting up containment
- 3. Local 911 centers dispatch a task-force response
- 4. Task force members (Sheriff deputies, Forest LEOs, State Law enforcement and City Police Departments) receive instructions on specific checkpoints.
- 5. Task force members use air-attack platform, binoculars and radio communications to contain, identify and stop drone operator

